5

10

## **ABSTRACT**

An apparatus and method are described for mapping a plurality of multimedia streams (e.g., received from a set of satellite transponders) across a lesser plurality of decoders. In one embodiment, arbitration logic allocates the multimedia streams to divide the decoding load equally among the group of decoders (or at least as equally as possible). Allocation may occur statically, when the system is initialized, or dynamically, as the streams are being processed. In addition, in one embodiment, the arbitration logic monitors the amount of multimedia data for each stream stored in a buffer and causes streams to be serviced by the decoders which have relatively more stored multimedia data.

TCW 91 04259.P075